MITCH WUZ HERE

THE PUNISHER®

EDMONDSON • GERADS

MARVEL

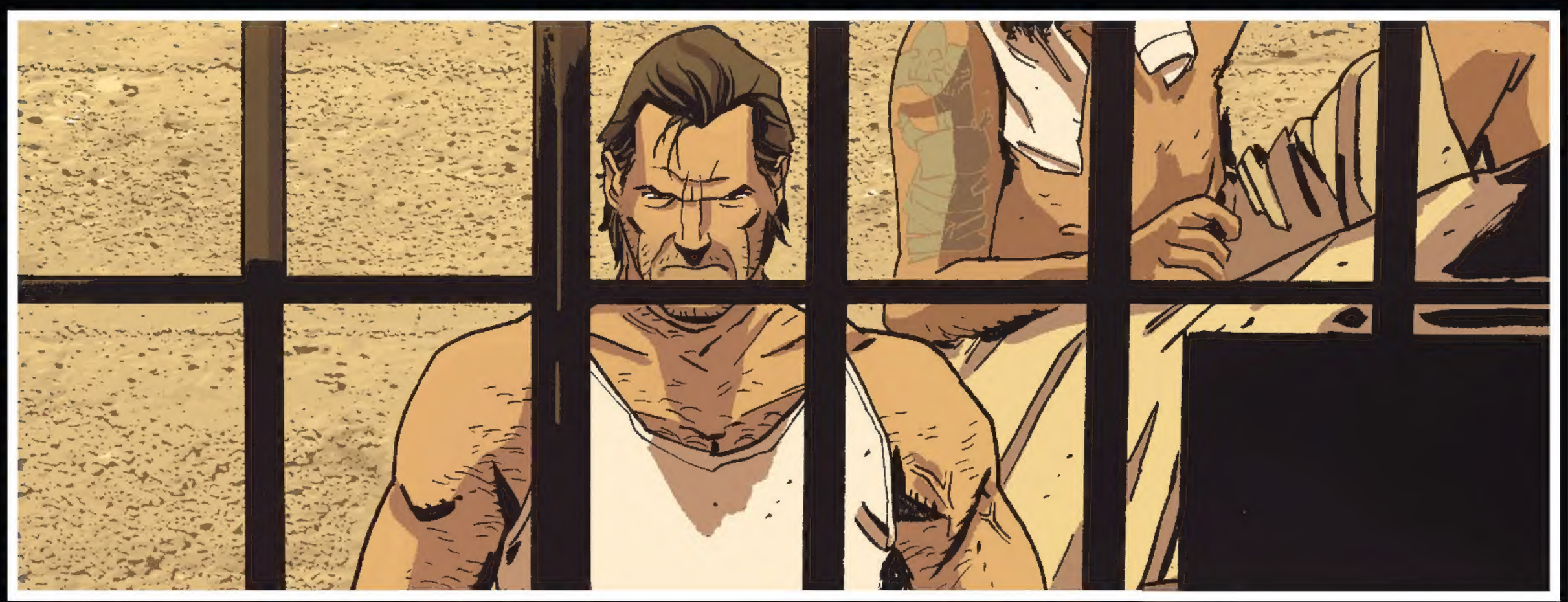
FRANK CASTLE was once a decorated Marine officer, an upstanding citizen and family man. Then his family was violently taken from him when they were accidentally killed in a mob hit. From that day on, Frank Castle shed his old identity and became a force of cold, calculated retribution and vigilantism known as

THE PUNISHER

PREVIOUSLY

At the end of the Punisher's war against the Dos Soles, Frank was shot in the chest and had his base of operations blown up by the Howling Commandos. While seeking medical attention south of the border he was captured by a Central American crime lord and sold into the hands of a buyer who sent the mercenary Crossbones to collect Castle.

When Crossbones was diverted to stop Black Widow from accessing a criminal information hub on board an abandoned oil tanker, Frank managed to escape with the help of Natasha. However, after their escape Black Widow appeared to rethink assisting the vigilante Punisher, as she dropped him off in a Costa Rican prison.



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CRIME

...THOUGH THE DOS SOLES TERRORIST PLOT AGAINST THE CITY WAS FOILED, CRIME HAS INCREASED DRAMATICALLY IN THE PAST TWO WEEKS, WITH AGGRAVATED ASSAULT, MURDER, RAPE AND DRUG-RELATED CHARGES REACHING DECADE HIGHS.

WHILE SOME BLAME THESE TRENDS ON THE MAN KNOWN AS **THE PUNISHER** BRINGING HIS BRAND OF VIGILANTISM TO THE WEST COAST, OTHERS ARGUE THE OPPOSITE IS TRUE...

...THAT THE PUNISHER'S ABSENCE FROM THE CITY OF LATE HAS EMBOLDENED THE CRIMINAL ELEMENTS, WHO, IN THE VOID LEFT BY THE DOS SOLES, HAVE SEIZED THE OPPORTUNITY...

NO FRANKY HERE TODAY?

HE COMES AND HE GOES, SAMMY. YOU HAVING ANYTHING BESIDES COFFEE?

NO, LOU. JUST NEED A MOMENT TO GET MY HEAD STRAIGHT.

IT'S CHAOS OUT THERE.

ENOUGH THAT MONICA AND KRISTEN HAVE STAYED ON VACATION. THAT'S LEFT ME WITH THE PLACE FOR A WHILE.

YOU GOT PROTECTION?

BENEATH THE BAR. SINCE THE RIOTS TWO DECADES AGO. WERE YOU AROUND FOR THOSE?

I WASN'T, NO.

YOU BE CAREFUL OUT THERE, OFFICER STONE.

THIS CITY IS A POWDER KEG.

WHEN IT'S LIT, YOUR BADGE WON'T MEAN MUCH.

ESPECIALLY WITH THE PUNISHER GONE.

COSTA RICA.

AMERICAN, YEAH?

WHAT'D YOU DO? DRUGS? RUNNING GUNS?

THIS BLOCK IS MOSTLY DRUGS. DRUGS, I FIGURE.

GRINGOS DON'T DO WELL HERE. IN HERE IT'S THE WILD WEST, AS YOU COWBOYS SAY.

WE GOT MARAS, WE GOT DOS SOLES, COLOMBIAN MILITIA, NOGALES FROM MEXICO...

EVERYONE HATES EACH OTHER IN HERE.

BUT MORE THAN ANYTHING, THEY HATE GRINGOS WHO--

BZZZZZ

<AT ATTENTION! REC TIME HAPPENS NOW!>

YOU LOOK FAMILIAR TO ME. HAVE WE MET BEFORE?

NO.

DEFINITELY NOT.

I NEVER THOUGHT MUCH OF PRISONS.

USUALLY WHEN I DEAL WITH CRIMINALS, THEY DON'T GET THE LUXURY OF THE PENAL SYSTEM.

REVOLVING DOORS, SECOND CHANCES, ALL THAT CRAP.

A REHABILITATED CRIMINAL IS A CRIMINAL WHO GOT A TRIP TO A MOTEL WITH THREE FREE MEALS A DAY FOR HIS CRIME.

HOW MANY FAMILY KILLERS ARE ENJOYING THE SUNSHINE TODAY?

WHO IS THAT?

HIM? HECTOR RUIZ.

NO ONE TOUCHES HIM, AND NO ONE KNOWS WHY.

HE WAS SOME KIND OF TRAFFICKER FOR THE BLACK MARKET.

YOU SHOULDN'T BE SO NOSY. YOU WON'T LIVE LONG IN HERE ASKING QUESTIONS.

SOME PEOPLE LIKE RUIZ? THEY MAYBE COME HERE TO GET AWAY, TO AVOID QUESTIONS ON THE OUTSIDE. HALF THE GUYS IN THIS PLACE USE FAKE NAMES, I THINK.

WHY ARE YOU IN HERE?

ME? SMALL POTATOES. KILLED A COUPLE OF GUYS FOR MY GANG. GANG GETS BUSTED, I GET BUSTED.

BUT HEY. NOW, I GET FOOD. I GOT A BED. I'M *SAFE.*

THAT SO?

HOW MUCH MORE FULL WOULD THESE PRISONS BE IF I HAD LET MEN LIVE?

SOME PEOPLE THINK CRIMINALS JUST MAKE MISTAKES...

THEY DON'T REALIZE THAT THESE MEN HAVE MADE A CHOICE, OVER AND OVER AGAIN.

THAT THEY'RE NOT HERE TO PAY FOR THEIR CRIMES.

THEY'RE HERE BECAUSE THEY'RE *CRIMINALS.*

LIKE THEM, I'M NOT HERE TO PAY FOR A CRIME.

I'M HERE TO COMMIT ONE.

DOWNTOWN L.A.

OFFICER STONE REQUESTING BACKUP AT 3RD AND RICKENBACKER, I HAVE MULTIPLE SHOOTERS FOLLOWING AN ATTEMPTED ROBBERY--

BACKUP IS DELAYED! ALL UNITS ARE BUSY!

THIS *SUCKS!*

HEY! POLICE, STOP!

I'M IN PURSUIT!

STONE, STAY HERE!

STOP! PUT YOUR HANDS ON YOUR HEAD.

STOP!

DAMN THUGS.

THIS IS OFFICER STONE. I HAVE A SUSPECT DOWN. REPEAT, SHOT FIRED, SUSPECT DOWN.

THE NEXT MORNING.

YOU GOT TO STOP STARING AT PEOPLE, MAN.

GUYS DON'T LIKE THAT IN HERE.

NOT ANYWHERE, REALLY.

NEVER THOUGHT I'D MISS LOU'S EGGS.

YOU LISTENING TO ME?

I DON'T MISS THINGS.

OVER THERE, LATEST CONGLOMERATION, CORPORATION OF PRISONERS HERE. THEY'RE MEAN AND LOOKING TO MAKE THEIR MARK. THEY'RE GOING TO TAKE DOWN A GANG HERE THIS WEEK, I THINK.

OVER THERE, WE GOT FORMER MILITARY GUYS, TRIED STEALING WEAPONS, GOT CAUGHT...GOT TOUGH...

IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE I'VE THOUGHT OF ANYWHERE AS HOME.

AND THE MOST RECENT, CLOSEST THING WAS BLOWN TO BITS BY--BY WHO, EXACTLY?

SO YOU GOT A LAY OF THE LAND, YOU DON'T NEED TO STARE NO MORE. THEY COME FOR YOU IN THE CELL, THEY KILL US BOTH. YOU UNDERSTAND THAT?

SOME OF THESE GANGS, LIKE THE MILITARY GUYS, THEY GOT THE GUARDS PAID OFF. THEY WILL GET ACCESS, COME OPEN YOUR CELL AND THEY KILL YOU IN YOUR SLEEP.

BUT I CAN'T WAIT TO GET OUT OF HERE.

WHERE YOU GOING? YOU DON'T LIKE TO TALK?

FINE, I DON'T TALK. JUST TRYING TO HELP.

MY APOLOGIES, BOYS.

APOLOGIES? YOU TELLING JOKES, FUNNY MAN? YOU LIKE AN AUDIENCE?

YOU'RE LUCKY YOU HAVE AN AUDIENCE NOW. BUT LATER...

LATER WE'LL SEE, FUNNY MAN. IT'S A SMALL PRISON.

LOS ANGELES CITY HALL.
INTERNAL AFFAIRS REVIEW BOARD.

OFFICER STONE, YOU DISCHARGED YOUR WEAPON WHEN THE CRIMINAL HAD HIS BACK TO YOU?

IT WAS CHAOS--WE HAD SHOTS FIRED IN THE CLUB, MY PARTNER WAS BEING ***BEATEN***, AND I RAN AFTER--

I'M SORRY, OFFICER. NOT TO CUT YOU OFF. BUT AT THIS POINT ALL WE NEED IS A YES OR NO ANSWER. YOUR BUTTON VIDEO DOESN'T GIVE US A CLEAR PICTURE.

AT THE MOMENT HE WAS TURNED AWAY, YES, HIS BACK WAS TO ME, BUT--

THAT CONCLUDES THE INITIAL HEARING.

YOU WILL BE SUSPENDED FROM ACTIVE DUTY UNTIL THE FULL INVESTIGATION IS COMPLETE AND--

I NEED ***EVERY*** OFFICER RIGHT NOW. HAVE YOU SEEN THE NEWS? THE STREETS ARE OUT OF CONTROL! IT'S A ***WAR ZONE!***

I'M SORRY, CHIEF. OUR RECOURSE TO ANARCHY IS VIGILANCE FOR THE LAW. THIS INVESTIGATION FALLS UNDER THAT STANDARD.

JUDGING BY TODAY'S DOCKET, IT'S YOUR ***FORCE*** THAT'S OUT OF CONTROL.

BRING IN THE NEXT OFFICER SCHEDULED. WE HAVE DOZENS MORE TODAY.

CLINK
CLINK
CLINK

OH, MAN. I TOLD YOU, MAN. I TOLD YOU.

AMERICAN DOG NEEDS TO LEARN A LESSON.

WOOF WOOF.

SO HOW ABOUT WE COME INTO THE DOGHOUSE FOR SOME DISCIPLINE?

MR. MAZO! I TOLD THE NEW GUY TO RESPECT YOU! I HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH IT!

TOO BAD. I THINK THE MORE THE MERRIER FOR THIS PARTY.

CRK

FWUMP

HOLY HELL.

GAAAAH!!

SLICE

KLANG!

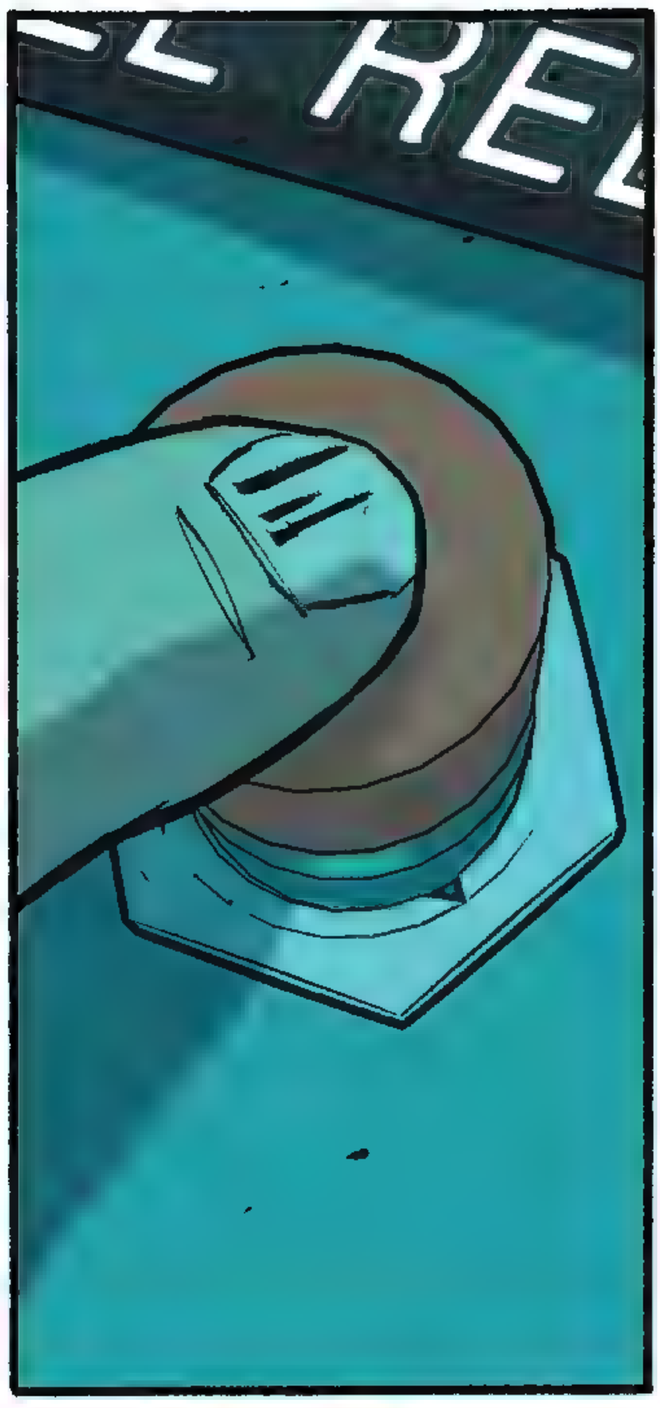
LUCHA!
LUCHA!
LUCHA!
LUCHA!
GAAAAHHHHH!
SCHUNK
WHOA.

WHERE ARE YOU GOING?! DON'T YOU KNOW WHAT WILL HAPPEN NOW?!

...RIOT.

KRACK

MASTER
CELL RELEASE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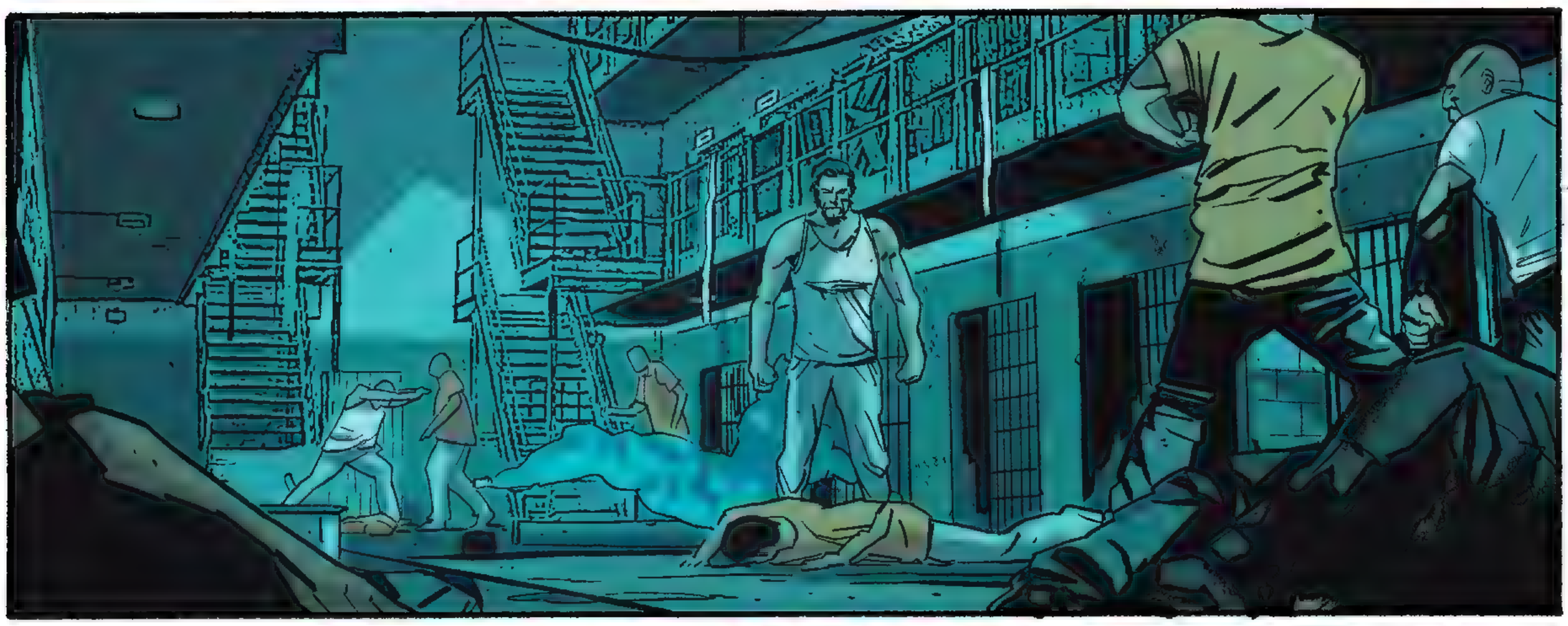

MR. RUIZ.

MY NAME IS FRANK CASTLE.

I THOUGHT WE COULD HAVE A LITTLE CHAT.

DOWNTOWN L.A.

DINER

HEY, CHIEF.

DINER

BREAKFAST AND LUNCH AND DINER

CLOSED FOR TONIGHT, KIDS.

YOU GOT IT WRONG, CHIEF.

THE CITY'S WIDE OPEN.

NEARBY.

ABANDONED THEATER. WE CAN TAKE IT OVER TEMPORARILY AND BEGIN OUR OPERATIONS.

AND THE PUNISHER. WHAT HAVE YOU HEARD?

WE HAVE NO LEADS SO FAR, MR. DEL SOL.

BUT WE HAVE SPOKEN WITH EVERY GANG LEADER IN TOWN. THEY LOOK FOR CASTLE AS WE FORM ALLIANCES.

HE LEFT *MY* CITY. HE CAME HERE FOR MY BROTHER...

...WE KILL HIM, AND THEN WE FINISH WHAT MY BROTHER STARTED.

LET'S BURN LOS ANGELES.